

Press Coverage 2018: Chablé Resort & Spa

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THE BEST HOTELS IN SOUTH AMERICA AND MEXICO



BRAZIL

HOTEL UNIQUE SAO PAULO

A real design pin-up with a rooftop bar that's at the heart of the local scene

It's not a Rorschach test. Don't dwell too long on Brazilian architect Ruy Ohtake's uncommon structure sitting on a grassy patch in São Paulo's refined Jardim Paulista neighbourhood. Is it a watermelon slice? An ocean liner? Step inside the gargantuan belly of a sunlit lobby, then spread out on one of the International Klein blue cushion couches to imbibe a glass of Champagne. More liquid satisfaction is found along The Wall, the lobby bar with its 60ft high stash of spirits (for bibliophiles, 300-plus titles hide alongside). Guests are sent on a sensory adventure, from the unlit lift and barely illuminated corridor to 95 white-on-white cabin-like guestrooms, where an oversized porthole window continues to play with a sense of scale even as an abundance of natural light flows through (highly effective blackout panels close it at the touch of a button). Most fun are those rooms running along the building's elongated curve, featuring floors that could almost double as a skateboard park. Surround-sound speakers are hidden in headboards, and in the see-through bathroom is a tub with whirlpool jets; less hi-tech but highly coveted are the complimentary Havaiana flip-flops in the closet. Save your appetite for the plump pink salmon sashimi, spicy Amazonian cassoulet and Portuguese arroz de pato (duck rice) at Dijon-born chef Emmanuel Bassoleil's rooftop Skye restaurant with its 360-degree metropolitan panorama and ruby-red lacquered swimming pool. Commandeer one of the white double daybeds and order Brazil's national cocktail, the Caipirinha, colour-coordinated with the pool with fresh strawberries and raspberries.

Address: Hotel Unique São Paulo, Avenida Brigadeiro Luís Antônio, 4700, Jardim Paulista, São Paulo

Telephone: +55 11 3055 4700

Website: hotelunique.com

Price: Doubles from about £229

Book this hotel: On [Expedia](#) now

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UXUA CASA HOTEL & SPA

A modern Brazilian getaway that offers the ultimate restoration

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Hidden among fisherman's casas painted cobalt-blue, pink and pistachio bordering Trancoso's sleepy village square, where the town's elders gather to shoot the breeze, Uxua is almost imperceptible to the passer-by. The only giveaway is the tables of smart Cariocas and international hipsters sipping passionfruit Caipirinhas while watching the early evening scene unfold on the Quadrado. Golden light catches the locals playing football around the whitewashed 16th-century church. This is just how expansive Dutch owner Wilbert Das (Diesel's former creative director) likes it.

Surrounded by dense rainforest and teetering high on a ridge overlooking the powder-sand fringed Atlantic, Uxua fits right into the post-hippie utopia of Trancoso. Working with local artisans, Das has turned the hotel into a collection of rustic renovated casas, cottages, an intimate treehouse and a tribal-inspired spa. All are cloaked by hummingbird-flecked tropical gardens and centred around a pool lined with green aventurine quartz, which, for those not up on their healing crystals, is said to be very therapeutic. Interiors are haute-boho: roomy indoor-outdoor sitting rooms and airy living spaces with dazzling-white walls and muslin-canopied beds, accented with lots of reclaimed wood, antiques and vintage finds including brightly painted Virgin Mary statuettes. A decked path runs through mangrove forests to the beach, where there are enormous day beds for post-breakfast snoozing and a beach bar fashioned from an old fishing boat – just stay horizontal and another Caipirinha will soon find its way to you. This is the South American coastal retreat that's on everyone's radar.

Address: UXUA Casa Hotel & Spa, Quadrado, Trancoso, Bahia, Brazil

Telephone: +55 73 3668 2277

Website: uxua.com

Price: Doubles from about £390

Book this hotel: [OnExpedia](#) now

MEXICO



CHABLÉ RESORT & SPA

The Mexican boutique hotel that offers the ultimate sense of escapism

Half an hour's drive from Mérida, the state capital of Yucatán, Chablé began life as an 18th-century sisal hacienda, and many of its original buildings endure. The arcaded Casa Principal, its faded stucco the blue of a Madonna's cloak, contains the bar and an enfilade of sitting rooms; the former machine house has been incorporated into the most ambitious of its four restaurants, which is under the auspices of Jorge Vallejo of Quintonil in Mexico City, ranked 11th in the World's 50 Best Restaurants; and a smaller building contains an immense library of tequilas. In case you feel the urge to atone for a surfeit of high living, the chapel of San Antonio, after whom the San Antonio Chablé estate was named, remains a house of God. Forty contemporary white-limestone-and-glass casitas are strung across the densely wooded 300-hectar estate, each with its own terrace, pool and hammock, and guests fall broadly into two categories: those who have come to explore the ruins of ancient abandoned Maya cities – Chablé is well placed for visiting Uxmal, arguably the greatest example of these on the Yucatán peninsula – and those who are here for the spectacular forest spa, where the pools are lined in tiles of petrified wood. Surrounded by jungle, a dozen treatment cabins are arranged around a cenote, a water-filled sink hole which the Maya believed to be a portal to the underworld but guests are told is a fountain of wellness. It's a place of such beauty and charm that even non-converts to traditional Maya healing rituals will succumb to the overall spirit and peace.

Address: Chablé Resort & Spa, Tablaje 642, Chocholá, Yucatán, Mexico

Telephone: +52 55 4161 4262

Website: chableresort.com

Price: Doubles from £780

Book this hotel: On [Expedia](#) now



HOTEL ESENCIA

A bleached-out beach hideaway

Right on Xpu-ha beach, the best stretch of white sands on this part of the Caribbean coast, Esencia is one of those hotels that is spoken about in hushed tones by those in the know, none of who want to let this secret get out. But those who do make it here discover a small, natural beauty of place set on a palm-swaying estate on the edge of the tumbling sea. There are hammocks to laze in, and a dimly lit spa where lotions and potions made from garden herbs are crushed into poultices to smooth out knots. For snorkeling among rainbow-colored fish, the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef is a five-minute hop on the hotel's catamaran.. There are ceviches and tiraditos to try at Mistura, a restaurant with views of the moon-dappled sea, and a wooden beach bar that does the best Margaritas in Mexico. And then there are the rooms. The interiors of the house, originally built as a hideaway for an Italian duchess, have splashes of fifties art and huge bedrooms with generous terraces. There are brand-new Jungle Rooms with plunge pools and beach suites that are a study in white. All in all, it is perfect.

Address: Hotel Escencia, Xpu-Ha, Quintana Roo 77750 Mexico

Telephone: +52 984 873 4830

Website: hotelesencia.com

Price: Doubles from £545

Book this hotel: On [Expedia](#) now